

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ZONE 1/1A ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes – Tuesday, June 20th, 2023

Meeting materials can be viewed at: <https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Zone1-1A>

Members Attending:

Charlie Lackie
Dianna Lackie
Gary Kobara (Chair)
Linda Austin
Victoria Cardoza

Staff and Guests Attending:

Alejandra Celio, Public Works
Brandon Zuniga, Public Works
Courtney Howard, Public Works
Francesca Devlin, Public Works
Jenny Williamson, Public Works
Joey Steil, Public Works
Karen White, Community Member
Monica Stillman, Public Works
Nathan Claud, Public Works

1. Welcome and Introductions

Introductions begin at 3:00 p.m. and a quorum is established.

2. Announcements

None

3. Review and Approval of Past Meeting Minutes: Tuesday, April 25, 2023

Motion to approve: Charlie Lackie
Seconded by: Victoria Cardoza
Approved by: Approved by all present Members

4. Receive Update on Storm Response Efforts

County Staff provide an update on storm response efforts and ask for questions or comments from the Committee.

Victoria Cardoza: What is the Voluntary Home Purchase Program and how is it applied?

County Staff: It is part of the Emergency Watershed Protection Program and provides grant funding to eligible agencies for eligible projects to remove structures and relocate associated impacted persons from a flood plain area.

Victoria Cardoza: What happens to the home and property? Is this opportunity presented pre-

or post- flood?

County Staff: Pre-flood. If eligible, the home would be purchased and removed, and the property would become an open space to restore the floodplain.

Gary Kobara: Would it be up to Zone 1/1A to come up with funds to pay for the home and property?

County Staff: This is a reimbursement-based grant. The money would be fronted by the Flood Control District Zone 1/1A and/or other fund sources as needed to purchase the property and be reimbursed through the grant.

Victoria Cardoza: Would this be considered imminent domain? What would happen to any structures on the property? When will you inform the home/property owners if they are eligible?

County Staff: No, it must be voluntary. There would be a fair market value assessment of the property and all structures would be removed to create an open space, and requirements for how the property should be maintained or used for flood protection would be put in place. We are still gathering details and providing information to the grantor and hope to know by September if this is a program we can pursue.

Gary Kobara: In the 2001 flood event, Zone 1/1A was responsible for paying for repairs after borrowing from the County's general fund. Would it be similar this time around, or are we in a better financial position to pay off debts?

County Staff: The County loan would cover the cost of the projects and the County would be reimbursed once the grant funding is received by FEMA.

County Staff: Updates will be provided at the September meeting concerning when construction will start and to address any concerns/questions. Construction is expected to begin mid-September and carry into October. Expect to see several trucks entering and exiting the creek removing sediment towards the end of summer.

Victoria Cardoza: The creek road currently cannot support the weight of any trucks due to its current structural status.

County Staff: We will check the structural status of the creek road prior to starting construction as a big portion of the sediment removal is downstream by the railroad bridge.

Karen White: Will you be able to get the project done before it starts raining again?

County Staff: We will be doing everything we can to complete the work prior to any expected rain.

5. Update/Presentation on the Meadow Creek Lagoon Habitat Restoration Project

County Staff present on the Meadow Creek Lagoon Habitat Restoration Project and ask for questions or comments from the Committee.

Victoria Cardoza: Where exactly is the Meadow Creek work being performed?

County Staff: At the end of the levee for Meadow Creek Lagoon; work will not be done to the creek itself, but the area across from Arroyo Grande Creek.

Charlie Lackie: Has the fish population remained the same or has it gotten better from lack

of vegetation upkeep?

County Staff: We are keeping a periphery eye on the fish monitoring that the State does and there have been no signs of a big build or return of steelhead. There are a lot of fish in Arroyo Grande Lagoon because of the over wash and opening to the ocean, but surveys of Meadow Creek Lagoon show no dramatic improvement for steelhead.

Karen White: What other efforts will be made to clean the targeted area of Meadow Creek Lagoon?

County Staff: If we do habitat enhancement, we would be removing invasive species in that area and try to develop more diverse native species vegetation. How far we go up into the lower areas is yet to be determined as it gets to be a function of cost due to the sediment removal and expansion the further up you go in the targeted area.

Karen White: Is there any consideration of the old master plan? As this area is all interconnected and currently one portion of the area is being focused on from Meadow Creek to Oceano Lagoon. Will there be a larger effort to enhance the whole area to improve the steelhead and vegetation population?

County Staff: State Parks is the property manager for the Oceano Lagoon that is located within Pismo State Beach and one of the efforts is coordinating an agreement of what can be done and where regarding habitat enhancement.

Victoria Cardoza: The cross bars placed in the Arroyo Grande Creek created sandbars which enhanced flooding.

Gary Kobara: They were talking about putting in a different type of flood gate in the concerned area that cleans out things easier and allows fish a clearer pathway while keeping saltwater at bay, but nothing has been heard as to what they came up with.

County Staff: They are going to model a few different fish gates and for some of the preliminary model runs with different kinds of gates. From that they will create a short list to choose an optimal gate that would work best. Hopefully there will be more information to provide in the fall on the modeling results.

Gary Kobara: They should look at it now as it's going out to the ocean nicely. There is a 3-foot drop where the mouth is now. If it were to rain, that would mean a 3-foot advantage of levee capacity upstream, rather than go back south and out. It's working right now as it should be. But when the creek stops, the sandbar gets to be 2-3 feet up and that changes the flow of the water back south causing the lagoon to fill up again.

6. Response to Question Regarding Operating Lopez Reservoir for Flood Control Purposes

County Staff summarizes the response provided in the staff report and asks for questions or comments from the Committee.

Karen White: Have they completed the Habitat Conservation Program (HCP) study?

County Staff: The study is still ongoing. Some modeling has been completed regarding the interaction between ground and surface water as part of the Arroyo Grande Groundwater Sustainability Plan as well as surveys and memos regarding field investigations done in summer of 2022. Further information will be provided as soon as updates are available.

Karen White: Will this study change the downstream release pattern?
County Staff: The study would evaluate the impacts of different release patterns.

7. Receive Update on Annual Workplan Efforts

County Staff present on Annual Workplan efforts and ask for questions or comments from the Committee.

Karen White: On the bank, where the fire and prison crews have been cleaning brush along Halcyon and Hwy 1 along Arroyo Grande Creek, there was a lot of debris left behind.

County Staff: We can have a crew pick up the debris cleared from the creek.

8. Public Comment

Charlie Lackie: Are there efforts being planned to remove additional sediment in the affected levee area, specifically the trestle area?

County Staff: Yes, as part of the Phase 1 Project, consultants prepared estimates for sediment removal in multiple areas of the creek. We are in the process of getting in contact with Union Pacific for approval of work as part of the removal falls within their right of way.

Charlie Lackie: Have you evaluated how the reinforcement mat worked?

County Staff: There has been some evaluation done on whether we keep the rock slope protection or reset with the turf reinforcement mat.

Charlie Lackie: Is there any way of addressing the squirrel activity in the area more efficiently.

County Staff: Part of the Phase II Project includes installation of the soil bentonite slurry cutoff walls 30 inches wide down the center of the levee that act as impermeable barriers for rodents and water. This will be included as part of the summer work planned.

The Committee and staff discuss the accuracy of the modeling and stormwater flow analysis prior to the January storm event.

Victoria Cardoza: Activities in the upper part of the creek contribute to sediment accumulation downstream; what is the status of the MOU?

County Staff: The Coastal San Luis Resources Conservation District leads the MOU group discussions and efforts at the watershed scale.

Victoria Cardoza: What part of the creek will you begin repairing?

Brandon Zuniga: Sediment removal and repair will begin on the downstream end where most of the sediment accumulation is.

Charlie Lackie: Does the model consider the water backing up against the trestle?

Brandon Zuniga: Yes, the model does monitor creek flow behavior at the trestle.

Karen White: Several plans recommend that the sandbar at the Arroyo Grande Creek mouth be cleared out every winter; how will this be accomplished?

County Staff: Sediment removal needs to be approved by State Parks.

The Committee and staff discuss the usage of emergency permits, State Parks jurisdiction, how to elevate the need for improvements to be made to the creek, and the areas where turf mat replacement may be repaired.

Charlie Lackie: When will the County clear out the drainage ditch along Silver Spur?

County Staff: We will follow up with the County maintenance crews.

9. Open Forum

Karen White: Requests updates on the Meadow Creek Lagoon Habitat Restoration Project.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 4:15 PM